THE MINISTER OF STATS OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH):

(a) No. Sir.

(b) It ii difficuilt to compare capital cost and selling prlte of electricity per unit of power projects with different fuels as they depend upon the location, technology, capital structure, gestation period, type of fuel lamong the other factors.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in. vievr of (a) above.

Steps to check falling profits of SAIL

*270. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to -state:

(a) the strategy flnjaliised by SAIL for cost cutting and reduced consumption of coal etc. to check the falling profits; and

(b) the other incentive schemes devised in consultation with the trade unions to ensure better performance of the SAIL?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) and (b) The stra-telgy adoptedl by SAIL for cost cutting mainly includes stricter control and closer monitoring of finanxdai; expenditure and materials consumption; greater utilisation o' available manpower and other i*n-house facilities; emphasis on preventive maintenance with stricter adherence to standard operating practices and reduction in adminiB-trative over-heads etc.

As a part of controlling consum-ption of materials, SAIL has taken measoiresi to reduce the specific consumption of Coking Coal which includes ensuring supply of the light quality and quantity of ilndi-genous coal by associating independent third party analysts and escorting of coal rakes; adopting coial saving practices like charging smaller coke fractions in the Blast Furnaces, higher usage of Sinter in the last Furnace burden, modernisa- tion of Blast Furnaces etc.

Besides, SAIL is taking steps on a continuous basis to itmpnove its per-formance, which include modernisia-tion and technological upgradation of its plants, improving techno-eco-nomic factors i.e. reduction in coke rate, energy consumption, metallic input, improvement in yield, captive power generation, extensive customer/ (Contact, market oriented pxo-i duct-icnix, Improvement in quality, long term relationship with customers, leadership in service and customer satisfaction, strict control land monitoring of operating costs, higher productivity and greater autonomy to field ofiicers, etc.

The incentive schemes which have been primary production based are being reoriented, in consultation with the Trade Unions, to maks them focus more on current priority areas of cost reduction and quality improvement.

Sick and closed industrial units in the conntry

*271. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state;

da) the number of sick and closed industrial imits in the country as per the latest estimates;

(b) the aggregate book value as well as the current miarket value of capital assets locked up in these units; and

(c) the total outstanding liabilities of these units to banks and other financial institutions?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) Data on sick industrial units assisted by banks in the country is compiled by the Reserve Bianfc of India. According to the latest available report as at the end of March, 1996, the position of industrial sickness in the country and the outstanding bank credit is as follows:

(Rs. in crores)

Category		No. of units	Outstanding Bank Credit
1.	SSI Sick	262376	3721.94
2.	Non-SSI Sick	1956	8823.19
3.	Non-SSI Weak	418	1203.12
	TOTAL :	2,64,750	13.748. 25

The data on aggregate book value/current market value of capital assets locked up in sick/ closed units is not centrally maintained.

Misuse of Scheduled Caste Act by gome states

*272. SHRI JALALUDIN AN SARI:

SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Scheduled Caste Act has been misused in some States; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken to check the same?

THE ^UNISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) and (b) The State Government of Assam, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal and the UT Admn, of Andaman & Nicobar, Chandigarh and Lakshadeep have stated that the Scheduled Caste Act has not been misused in their respect'-. 3 State/UT. The State Govt, of Maharashtra has informed that sometimes cases were filed by the members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes On .extraneous consideration under the PCR Act and the SCs (and STs (POA). Act. Govt, of Maharashtra has decided to recommend to the Courts, as per provisions laid down in Sec. 321 of the Criminal Procedure Code withdriawalg of prosecutions based on alleged offences of trivial nature wherein no loss of life, or property or offences of serious nature were involved.

Coal based power plants

*273. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:
SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA-

Will the Minister Of COAL be pleased to state.-

(a) the number of coal based power plants in the country;